

GULL LAKE RESERVOIR DAM,
DAM TENDER'S RESIDENCE
Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoirs
Lake Shore Vicinity
Cass County
Minnesota

HAER No. MN-70-A

HAER
MINN
11-LKSHO.V,
1A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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I. Introduction

Location: Gull Lake, Lake Shore Vicinity, Cass County,
Minnesota

Quad: Gull Lake Quadrangle

UTM: N5140390, E395980

Date of
Construction: 1912

Present Owner: St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of
Engineers

Present Use: Offices for Regulatory Functions

Significance: The Gull Lake Dam Tender's House is one of
two remaining original dam tender's dwellings
at the Mississippi River Headwaters dam
sites. Until recently, when the Corps of
Engineers decided it was no longer necessary
for personnel to live at the dam site, dam
tenders and their families lived in the
houses.

The dam tender's dwelling was one of many
original structures that formed a complex at
each of the dam sites, which included service
buildings, root cellars, chicken coops, barns
and the dam tender's office. This complex of
structures allowed dam personnel and their
families to be self-sufficient.

The Gull Lake Dam Tender's House is a good
example of Craftsman style architecture,
which was popular in Minnesota between 1909
and 1920.

Historian: Dr. Jane Lamm Carroll
St. Paul District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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The Gull Lake Dam Tender's Residence

The dam tender's house at Gull Lake is a two-story, gable-roofed dwelling of concrete and beam construction. Shed-roofed dormers provide additional light to the second story. Asbestos shingles cover the roof and also finish the gable ends and dormers. The windows are one-over-one double hung sash, with a variety of sizes and groupings.

The surface is composed of concrete panels of a large pink, gray and black aggregate surrounded by a smooth concrete margin. The exterior panels are solid concrete. The Corps applied painted wood trim where the forms were joined, and there is a wide wooden sill board.

The house is a good example of the Craftsman style of architecture. One characteristic of this style is its honest, straightforward treatment of materials. Brick, stucco, and frame Craftsman style houses were built extensively in Minnesota between 1905 and 1920. Notable details associated with the style are exposed rafter ends at the eaves, grouped windows, and simple board trim.

The seven-room house is finished with varnished birch trim throughout the interior. The floors are hardwood and there are many built-in cabinets with intact original hardware. The kitchen cabinets are in good condition, and like the upstairs woodwork, have never been painted. Window and door frames in the

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house have the flat, squared-off profiles associated with the Craftsman style. The solid-core, four-panel doors have oval eschuteons and knobs. Picture moldings are also included on the walls in some rooms. The Corps provided a hot air furnace and plumbing in the original construction.¹

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1. Carole Zellie, "Upper Mississippi Headwaters Reservoirs Damsites Cultural Resources Investigation," Report Prepared for the St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers, 1988, p. 106.